

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy having a plurality of physically spaced apart locations for filling the prescription order including the following steps:

receiving a plurality of prescription orders from a customer;

grouping said plurality of prescription orders together in a common carrier thereby defining a group of prescription orders;

operably securing a machine-readable tag to the common carrier, said tag having a unique identifier that is readable by a tag reader in proximity to the tag regardless of its orientation relative to the tag reader;

associating the unique identifier of the tag with customer information stored in a computer system in association with said group of prescription orders;

a pharmacy worker manually moving the common carrier by hand to at least one location within the pharmacy, said at least one location selected by the pharmacy worker without instruction from the computer system;

the tag reader electronically ~~automatically~~ detecting the prescription orders at the at least one location, without an affirmative tracking act by the pharmacy worker, by electronically sensing the at least one identifying tag attached to the common carrier;
and,

recording the location of the prescription orders at each location.

2. (original) The method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 1, further including the steps of:

displaying the location of the prescription orders on a computer system display viewable by pharmacy workers, thereby facilitating the easy location of said prescription orders.

3. (original) The method for tracking prescription order through a pharmacy of claim 2, further including displaying the status of said plurality of prescription orders on a customer display viewable by customers.

4. (original) The method for tracking prescription order through a pharmacy of claim 2, wherein said pharmacy is a retail pharmacy.

5. (currently amended) A prescription order tracking system for tracking a plurality of prescription orders from a customer in a retail pharmacy having a first station therein for filling the prescription orders, said tracking system including:

a computer system having a display;

means for grouping the plurality of prescription orders into a common carrier;

machine-readable tag means in communication with said computer system and operably secured to said common carrier, said machine-readable tag means for ~~automatically and electronically~~ bundling the plurality of prescription orders from a customer together so as to allow them to be identified with the customer; and,

a first tag reader positioned near the first station and in communication with said computer system, said first tag reader able to electronically ~~automatically~~ detect the presence of said tag, without an affirmative tracking act by the pharmacy worker, when said tag is in close proximity of said first tag reader and send a first signal to said computer system;

wherein said computer system processes said signal to display the presence of said tag at said first station, thereby displaying the location of said prescription orders.

6. (Previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, further including:

a second station spaced apart from said first station; and wherein said second station has a second tag reader positioned in communication with said computer system, said second tag reader able to detect the presence of said machine-readable tag means when said tag is in close proximity of said second tag reader and send a second signal to said computer system;

wherein said computer system processes said first signal and said second signal to display the location of said machine-readable tag means at one of said first and second stations, thereby displaying the location of said prescription order.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag reader locates said machine-readable tag means through electromagnetic interrogation of a spatial region.

9. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said tag reader is an electromagnetic field generator, and said machine-readable tag means is an electromagnetic antenna.

10. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said machine-readable tag means is a transmitter for transmitting a signal, and said tag reader is able to receive said signal.

11. (canceled)

12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, wherein said machine-readable tag means is secured to said carrier for receiving the prescription order therein.

14. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 5, further including:

a storage bin having a plurality of cubbies, each said cubby having an individual cubby identifier, and having a cubby tag reader in communication with said computer system, such that the presence of said tag within one of said plurality of cubbies is detectable by that cubby's tag reader and sends a cubby location signal to said computer system, said cubby location signal including the individual cubby identifier of said one of said plurality of cubbies;

wherein said computer system processes said first signal and said cubby location signal to display the location of said machine-readable tag means at one of said first location or said one of said plurality of cubbies.

15. (original) The prescription order tracking system of claim 14, wherein said cubby tag reader is hand-held and manually operated.

16. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 14, wherein said computer system determines that a particular prescription order is ready by detecting the presence of said particular prescription order in a cubby, and displays that this order is ready on a customer display viewable by customers.

17. (original) The prescription order tracking system of claim 16, wherein said customer display includes displaying the customer name and prescription order status of at least one said customer.

18. (original) The prescription order tracking system of claim 16, wherein said customer display includes displaying a unique code associated with said customer, thereby preserving the customer's confidentiality.

19. (original) The prescription order tracking system of claim 16, wherein said computer system monitors the average time to file a prescription and uses this information to determine an estimated completion time for a particular prescription order.

20. (original) The prescription order tracking system of claim 19, wherein said estimated completion time is displayed on the customer display and associated with the customer submitting the prescription order.